



michigan suburbs alliance

May 27, 2010

The Honorable Pam Byrnes
Chair, House Transportation Committee
State Capitol, Room 251
PO Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Chairperson Byrnes and Members of the Committee:

I ask you to support the Michigan Complete Streets legislation both on behalf of the Michigan Suburbs Alliance and as a Ferndale City Councilmember. Michigan's communities recognize the value of a complete streets approach to support their neighborhoods and downtowns, and several are moving in that direction. House Bills 6151 and 6152 will support those local efforts and ensure coordination with County Road Commissions and the Michigan Department of Transportation.

The Suburbs Alliance believes that providing for a variety of safe, effective transportation options has benefits for all communities, and supports implementation efforts in our 31 member municipalities in southeast Michigan.

- Through complete streets, we can maximize access to employment and educational opportunities for communities suffering job losses. This is especially important in light of recent data from the Center for Neighborhood Technology showing that communities where households are dependent on automobile travel are less affordable than communities where residents have transportation options.
- Through complete streets, we can create safe spaces for cyclists and pedestrians in our neighborhoods and downtowns. Not only does this provide for the one-third of our residents who do not drive because of age or ability, but it also adds to the quality of life our communities can offer to current and future residents in combating population decline and brain drain.
- Through complete streets, we can better coordinate the planning and construction of our transportation infrastructure to serve current and future needs. This coordination helps communities avoid costly and disruptive work in the future from trying to retrofit single-use roadways for additional needs.


As a Ferndale City Councilmember, I recognize that my community will benefit from these and other advantages of complete streets. The City of Ferndale's Master Plan, adopted in 2008, identified diverse transportation options as a critical piece of being an attractive, safe, and successful community. I am currently working with Ferndale's Planning Commission to draft a Complete Streets ordinance for the City to advance this goal.

Ferndale also knows, though, that it cannot reach this goal alone – we must coordinate our work with MDOT, the Oakland County Road Commission, and our neighboring communities. We have been working with our neighboring communities and MDOT, through Woodward Avenue Action Association, to create a non-motorized plan for the central segment of Woodward Avenue. Coordination, both on and off Woodward, has been a key piece of that discussion. On Woodward, we hope to improve the environment for cyclists and pedestrians, but also anticipate future rapid transit along that corridor. Addressing all of these needs, across 7 communities, will require the kind of holistic planning of the roadway that complete streets promotes. The individual communities need to provide connections to Woodward, but also need to ensure that we're creating connections along parallel routes.

Projects like Woodward Avenue demonstrate why we need the proposed complete streets legislation. By providing for complete streets policies and coordination at every level between the state and county road agencies and local communities, the legislation will support our local efforts to build strong neighborhoods and downtowns.

Finally, from both the local and regional perspective, adopting a complete streets approach to transportation planning will make Michigan more competitive for Federal funding of all kinds. Under the Federal Livability Partnership, DOT, HUD and EPA have declared their support for communities that have planned for diverse transportation options. We in Michigan need to ensure that we are aligned with Federal priorities and the adoption of complete streets legislation will help demonstrate that alignment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Melanie Piana". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Melanie Piana

Associate Director, Michigan Suburbs Alliance
City Councilwoman, City of Ferndale